At First, and Then

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At First, and Then

by Zigzagwanderer

Summary

This takes place after 'A Song for Lost Blossoms', but is half past, half present (just for fun!).

Oh, and I should say that in this series, Will and Hannibal have survived the Fall and have been living together as Thom and Eirik Buckley on an island in an archipelago in the chilly Baltic sea. I'm really sorry, it's a bit hard to summarise everything that's happened since 'The Rhymes of Goodbye' onwards. There have been more ups than downs, I think? As always, I really am grateful if you read this. It means such a lot.xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Notes

(sorry, I will return to this part of the story soon -I kind of stopped because my dog got really ill, and hopefully when I don't feel so sad about losing him I'll complete the other two chapters.)

Chapter 1

(at first)

Will sits in the bar.

It is unfriendly. Underworldly.

Ill-fitting for him, so it suits; he has worked the back alleys to find someplace close by that doesn't have a badge pinned on it.

He is tired of caging corridors, whispered clean by wings. Tired of those badges, that shield those faces, so that only frowns and pity smiles show. He is tired of the surfeiting fidelity and integrity, directed everywhere but at him.

And most of all, he is tired of the unwanted awareness, the odd, transgressive allegiance, the goddamn arousal he feels whenever that man is anywhere near him.

Or maybe he is just tired of fighting it.

He sags further down, down over the spoiled, whiskey-shined surface, pressed down like a specimen onto a slide which no one yet knows is fatally compromised, and he orders himself another beer.

And he thinks; this is not what fieldwork was supposed to be like.

(and then)

Will sits in the bar. It is unpolished, perditious.

So. It will do; he has scoured the orderly, opulent city for someplace that does not sparkle, and by sparkling, remind him of home. He does not care to think of the Sarvian sky, sugared with ice. The crystal they used on the night that his wedding band first circled his finger.

The man who put it there.

And yet he is lying to himself about that liar; cut glass should not remind him of that man, for neither man nor ring have ever sparkled.

They burn.

Him.

They sear, they kindle. They have fused themselves to the very matter of him, in a way that bright, truly translucent things never have.

Will orders a complex, mixed drink and stares the barman down until it is provided.

He looks at the dull metal ring on his left hand.

And he thinks; this is not what a honeymoon is supposed to be like.

Chapter 2

(at first)

Even when the dead begin to pile up, and the bar is unbearably hot, or maybe that's just him, no-one slides themselves onto the threadbare gurney next to his.

He can hear the crack of their rigored spines, as they lean across him, ordering pitchers of poison and little bullets of vodka. He is dizzied by their twitching along to the jukebox, and he chokes on their pyre-scented cigarettes.

But not one so much as brushes against Will's sleeve.

Even grey and crooked as they are, they know.

Not that he is of the law, but that he is the dead among the dead, who carries the dead on his shoulders, who has their eyes pasted across his eyes.

So, Will medicates himself, and is avoided, and waits until the inevitable moment comes when loneliness exceeds self-preservation.

The screen of his cellphone is cracked, or maybe that's just him, and he dials the number that is always, fucking somehow, the last number viewed.

Bad idea or not, he needs to see Hannibal.

(and then)

Even with all the meat on display, self-racked and old-eyed, Will is baited from the moment he takes the corner table.

It is not the fine cut and cloth of him. Not the trimmed beard, the controlled curl. The high-collared, high-end coat.

The bar is full of those with teeth, with predators, and they can see beneath; that Will is feathered and hooved, scaled and horned.

Singularity lustres him. He could fuck them all, or bite into their hearts, and they would be glad of either distinction.

They fawn, and preen, and Will does something dark with his eyes.

He wonders about their sense of self-preservation; he tells his suitors that he is a monster's mate.

But still they try. It is amusing.

Until Will is restless; their displays are, to him, uninteresting. He does not want to be where he is, as he is. Without.

He has, perhaps, run, when he should have fought.

Should have bitten, should have fucked.

So, he sighs, and he gets out his burner, and he dials the number of the corresponding burner that rings in the middle of the chilly Baltic sea.

Betrayed or not, he needs to see Hannibal.

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